

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 2989 without my signature.

I support the bill's goal to increase the number of registered nurses for California and to provide CalWORKs recipients with the opportunity to enroll in, and complete, registered nursing education programs that will assist them in obtaining higher paying jobs.

However, AB 2989 is unnecessary as its goals can be accomplished under the CalWORKs work reforms enacted in the Health and Human Services budget trailer bill, Senate Bill 1104 (Committee on Budget). SB 1104 eliminated the 18 and 24-month CalWORKs time limit on education activities and instead requires CalWORKs recipients to participate in work-related activities for 20 hours each week. CalWORKs participants in approved nursing programs will now be able to continue their education until they complete their program or reach the CalWORKs 60-month time limit, as long as they are progressing in their program and meeting program requirements.

Furthermore, legislation that establishes different program requirements for residents in only one county in California raises legal questions pertaining to the Federal Equal Protection Clause and the California Constitution.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger